

What is claimed is:

1. A portable computer, comprising:
a base;
a lid that pivots relative to the base; and
a latch configured to secure the lid to the base, the latch including a data capture device.
2. The portable computer as recited in claim 1 wherein the latch is configured to move relative to the lid.
3. The portable computer as recited in claim 2 wherein the latch pivots, swivels or translates relative to the lid.
4. The portable computer as recited in claim 2 wherein the latch is detachable from the lid.
5. The portable computer as recited in claim 1 wherein the lid pivots between an open position, placing the lid away from the base, and a closed position placing the lid next to the base, and wherein the base includes a latch receiving area that is cooperatively positioned with the latch so that when the lid is closed the latch and latch receiving area engage one another thus securing the lid to the base.
6. The portable computer as recited in claim 5 wherein the latch and latch receiving area include locking features that lockably engage with one another when the latch is positioned adjacent the latch receiving area, and wherein the latch or latch receiving area includes an actuator for disengaging the locking features.
7. The portable computer as recited in claim 1 wherein the latch includes one or more indicators.

8. The portable computer as recited in claim 1 wherein the data capture device is a camera, the camera including a charge coupled device (CCD) image sensor or a complimentary oxide semiconductor (CMOS) image sensor.

9. A laptop computer, comprising:
a base containing a processor;
a lid pivotally coupled to the base, the lid containing a display operatively coupled the processor;
a latch pivotally coupled to the lid, the latch containing an electronic feature operatively coupled to the processor and a locking feature for lockably engaging the base.

10. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the latch includes a slider switch for disengaging the locking feature from the base.

11. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the lid includes an LCD that is surrounded at its periphery by a bezel, and wherein the latch is attached to the bezel.

12. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the latch is configured to mate with a cut-out in the base in order to secure the lid to the base.

13. The laptop computer as recited in claim 12 wherein the locking feature is a hook that is configured to capture a plunger attached to the base and located in the cut-out.

14. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein latch contains a camera that is operatively coupled to the processor, the camera including a CMOS image sensor chip and a lens assembly.

15. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 further comprising a positioning device for controlling the rotation of the latch about its axis.

16. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the latch is automatically positioned in a home position when the lid is positioned in an open position, and wherein the latch is automatically positioned in a lock position when the lid is positioned in a closed position.
17. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the positioning device includes a latch tilting mechanism configured to convert the rotation of the lid about its axis to rotation of the latch about its axis.
18. The laptop computer as recited in claim 17 wherein the lid is pivotally coupled to the base via a first hinge mechanism and the latch is pivotally coupled to the lid via a second hinge mechanism, and wherein the latch tilting mechanism includes a belt that rotatably couples an axle of the first hinge mechanism to an axle of a second hinge mechanism.
19. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the latch contains a symbol illumination system that is operatively coupled to the processor, the symbol illumination system including a light source for illuminating a symbol on an illuminable portion of the latch.
20. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the light source is a light emitting diode (LED).
21. The laptop computer as recited in claim 9 wherein the latch contains a camera and a symbol illumination system.
22. A monitor, comprising:
a display housing
a display coupled to the display housing; and
a camera coupled to the display housing.
23. The monitor as recited in claim 22 wherein the camera is disposed inside a camera housing that is movably coupled to the display housing.